IN THE CLAIMS:

Please CANCEL claims 24 and 25, without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please AMEND claim 20 as indicated below:

1-4. (canceled)

5. (previously presented) A motion vector encoding device for encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting means for predicting a motion vector of a target block based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block;

determining means for determining accuracy of a prediction made by said predicting means based on degrees of non-uniformity of the plurality of motion vectors; and

encoding means for encoding the motion vector of the target block using a result of the prediction made by said predicting means with an encoding method determined based on a result of a determination made by said determining means, and wherein:

said predicting means comprises first and second predicting means for respectively predicting first and second components of the motion vector of the target block;

said determining means comprises

first determining means for determining the accuracy of the prediction made by said first predicting means based on degrees of non-uniformity of respective first components of the plurality of motion vectors, and

second determining means for determining the accuracy of the prediction made by said second predicting means based on degrees of non-uniformity of respective second components of the plurality of motion vectors, a first component of the motion vector of the target block, and the respective first components of the plurality of motion vectors; and

said encoding means comprises

first encoding means for encoding the first component of the motion vector of the target block by using a result of a prediction made by said first predicting means with an encoding method determined based on a result of a determination made by said first determining means, and

second encoding means for encoding the second component of the motion vector of the target block by using a result of a prediction made by said second predicting means with an encoding method determined based on a result of a determination made by said second determining means.

6-10. (canceled)

11. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding device for decoding an encoding result which is obtained by encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting means for predicting a motion vector of a target block based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block;

determining means for determining accuracy of a prediction made by said predicting means based on degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block; and

decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction made by said predicting means with a decoding method selected from at least two different decoding methods based on a result of a determination made by said determining means,

wherein said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

12. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding device for decoding an output of a motion vector encoding device which predicts a motion vector of a target block within a frame based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block within the frame, determines accuracy of a prediction based on degrees of non-uniformity of a plurality of motion vectors which have already been encoded in an area adjacent to the target block, and encodes the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction with an encoding method determined based on a result of a determination of the accuracy of the prediction, in order to encode motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting means for predicting the motion vector of the target block within the frame based on motion vectors of at least two of the plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block used to make the determination within the motion vector encoding device;

determining means for determining accuracy of a prediction made by said predicting means based on the degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block by determining whether differences between any of the vectors is greater than a threshold; and

decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction made by said predicting means with a decoding method selected from at least two

different decoding methods based on a result of a determination made by said determining means,

wherein said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

13. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding method for decoding a result of encoding obtained by encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting a motion vector of a target block based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block;

determining accuracy of a prediction based on degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block; and

decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction with a decoding method selected from at least two different decoding methods based on a result of a determination of the accuracy of the prediction,

wherein said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

14. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 11, wherein said determining means determines the accuracy of the prediction made by said predicting means based on the degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors which have already been decoded in an area adjacent to the target block.

15. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 12, wherein said determining means determines the accuracy of the prediction made by said predicting means based on the degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors which have already been decoded in an area adjacent to the target block.

16. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 13, wherein said determining means determines the accuracy of the prediction made by said predicting means based on the degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors which have already been decoded in an area adjacent to the target block.

17. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 11, wherein said decoding means comprises:

at least two individual decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block

with said at least two different decoding methods, respectively; and

selecting means for selecting one of said at least two individual decoding means based on the result of the determination made by said determining means, and for outputting a result of decoding performed by the selected individual decoding means.

18. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 12, wherein said decoding means comprises:

at least two individual decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block with said at least two different decoding methods, respectively; and

selecting means for selecting one of said at least two individual decoding means based on the result of the determination made by said determining means, and for outputting a result of decoding performed by the selected individual decoding means.

19. (previously presented) The motion vector decoding device according to claim 13, wherein said decoding means comprises:

at least two individual decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block with said at least two different decoding methods, respectively; and

selecting means for selecting one of said at least two individual decoding means based on the result of the determination made by said determining means, and for outputting a result of decoding performed by the selected individual decoding means.

20. (currently amended) A motion vector decoding device for decoding an output of a motion vector encoding device which predicts a motion vector of a target block based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block, determines accuracy of a prediction based on a plurality of motion vectors which have already been encoded in an area adjacent to the target block, and encodes the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction with an encoding method determined based on a result of a determination of the accuracy of the prediction, in order to encode motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting means for predicting the motion vector of the target block based on the plurality of motion vectors used to make the determination within the motion vector encoding device;

determining means for determining accuracy of a prediction made by said predicting means based on the degrees of non-uniformity of motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block; and

decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of

the prediction made by said predicting means with a decoding method selected from at least two different decoding methods based on a result of a determination made by said determining means,

wherein ~~sat~~ said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

21. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding device for decoding an encoding result which is obtained by encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting means for predicting a motion vector of a target block based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block;

determining means for determining accuracy of a prediction made by said predicting means based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block; and

decoding means for decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction made by said predicting means with a decoding method selected from at least two different decoding methods based on a result of a determination made by said determining means,

wherein said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

22. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding method for decoding a result of encoding obtained by encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting a motion vector of a target block within a frame based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block within the frame;

determining accuracy of a prediction based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block by determining whether differences between any of the vectors is greater than a threshold; and

decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction with a decoding method selected from at least two different decoding methods based on a result of a determination of the accuracy of the prediction,

wherein said at least two different decoding methods use different codes, respectively, to decode the same motion vector.

23. (previously presented) A method as recited in claim 22, wherein the motion vectors comprise first, second and third motion vectors, and said determining comprises:

determining a first absolute value of difference between the first and second motion vectors, determining a second absolute value of difference between the second and third motion vectors, and determining a third absolute value of difference between the first and third motion vectors;

comparing the first absolute value to the threshold, comparing the second absolute value to the threshold and comparing the third absolute value to the threshold; and

indicating that the prediction is not accurate when any of the first, second and third absolute values are greater than the threshold.

24. (CANCELED)

25. (CANCELED)

26. (previously presented) A motion vector decoding method for decoding a result of encoding obtained by encoding motion vectors of respective blocks obtained by partitioning each frame of moving image data, comprising:

predicting a motion vector of a target block within a frame based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block within the frame;

determining accuracy of a prediction based on motion vectors of a plurality of blocks adjacent to the target block by determining whether differences between any of the vectors is greater than a threshold; and

decoding the motion vector of the target block by using a result of the prediction with a decoding method determined based on a result of a determination of the accuracy of the prediction,

wherein the motion vectors comprise first, second and third motion vectors, and said determining comprises:

determining a first absolute value of difference between the first and second motion vectors, determining a second absolute value of difference between the second and third motion vectors, and determining a third absolute value of difference between the first and third motion vectors;

comparing the first absolute value to the threshold, comparing the second absolute value to the threshold and comparing the third absolute value to the threshold; and

indicating that the prediction is not accurate when any of the first, second and third absolute values are greater than the threshold.